



## Definitions

### Trauma-Informed:

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

### Bias:

Implicit bias is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors.

### Person-Centered-Language:

Wording that introduces a person first and then follows with a descriptor in relation to a disability, medical or behavioral health condition, or other physical or cognitive difference. It is intended to emphasize the fullness of a person and to avoid defining them exclusively by their disability or condition.

### Structural Stigma:

Laws, policies, or regulations that can both intentionally and unintentionally result in discrimination.

### Public Stigma:

Negative or discriminatory attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals and groups.

### Self Stigma:

Negative attitudes, including internalized shame, that people have about themselves



# Trauma-Informed Language

## Language Checklist

- ✓ I have used "person-centered" language.
- ✓ I have avoided language that unintentionally reinforces stigma and/or shame.
- ✓ I have used accessible language instead of jargon or acronyms.
- ✓ I have avoided using sensational or fear-based language.
- ✓ I have avoided using language that perpetuates perceptions based on false information and/or implicit bias.
- ✓ I have used language that is current- trauma informed.

☒ YES  
☒ NO



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES

OTRP Office of Trauma  
and Resilience Policy

## The Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy (OTRP):

- Leads efforts to infuse and sustain trauma-informed and healing-centered knowledge and skills into VDSS culture, policies, and practices;
- Fosters collaboration with state-level stakeholders to align and coordinate our trauma and resilience efforts and initiatives; and
- Engages with local partners and communities to promote resilience and healing in the children, families, and individuals we serve.

## OTRP Goals

- Facilitate Department of Social Services (DSS) Culture Change to More Fully Embody Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered Care
- Promote Agency Collaboration Around Trauma, Resilience, and Healing in Policy and Practice
- Promote Resilience and Healing Across Child and Family-Serving Systems and Sectors in Virginia

## Resources

- [\*Disrupting Stigma: How Understanding, Empathy, and Connection Can Improve Outcomes for Families Affected by Substance Use and Mental Disorders\*](#)
- [Think Cultural Health: Combating Implicit Bias and Stereotypes](#)
- [Inclusive Language Guidelines \(apa.org\)](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Policy Making Tool](#)

## Contact Us



[otrp@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:otrp@dss.virginia.gov)



<https://www.dss.virginia.gov/community/otrp/index.cgi>



801 E. Main St, Richmond, VA,  
23219